



## **MECKLENBURG COUNTY**

### **Public Health**

**Gibbie Harris, MSPH, BSN**  
**Health Director**

**(704) 336-4700**

### **Order for Prohibiting Mass Gatherings**

The virus that causes Coronavirus 2019 Disease is easily transmitted, especially in group settings, and it is essential that the spread of the virus be slowed to protect the ability of public and private health care providers to handle the influx of new patients and safeguard public health and safety. Because of the risk of the rapid spread of the virus, and the need to protect the most vulnerable members of the community, this Order prohibits all indoor public and private gatherings and outdoor gatherings within an enclosed space of 50 persons or more anywhere in Mecklenburg County beginning at 8 a.m. on March 16, 2020 and continuing for four weeks through April 12, 2020, subject to the limited exceptions and under the terms and conditions more particularly set forth below.

This Order is issued based on scientific evidence and best practices regarding the most effective approaches to slow the transmission of communicable diseases generally and COVID-19 specifically, and evidence that the age, condition, and health of a significant portion of the population of the County places them at risk for serious health complications, including death, from COVID-19. Some individuals who contract the COVID-19 virus have no symptoms or have mild symptoms, which means they may not be aware they carry the virus. Because even persons without symptoms can transmit the disease, and because evidence shows the disease is easily spread, large gatherings can result in preventable transmission of the virus. The scientific evidence shows that at this stage of the emergency, it is essential to slow virus transmission as much as possible to protect the most vulnerable and to prevent the health care system from being overwhelmed. One proven way to slow the transmission is to limit mass gatherings in the early stages

**PEOPLE • PRIDE • PROGRESS • PARTNERSHIPS**

249 Billingsley Road • Charlotte, North Carolina 28211

[www.meckhealth.org](http://www.meckhealth.org)

of the emergency. By reducing the spread of the COVID-19 virus, this Order helps preserve critical and limited healthcare capacity in the County.

This Order is issued to prevent circumstances often present in Mass Gatherings that are likely to exacerbate the spread of COVID-19. Those circumstances include, without limitation: (a) the increased likelihood that Mass Gatherings will attract people from a broad geographic area; (b) the prolonged time period during which large numbers of people are in close proximity; (c) the difficulty in tracing exposure when large numbers of people attend a single event; and (d) the inability to ensure that attendees follow adequate hygienic and social distancing practices.

This Order is issued in accordance with, and incorporates by reference, the March 10, 2020 Proclamation of a State of Emergency issued by Governor Roy Cooper and the Local State of Emergency issued by Mecklenburg County and the City of Charlotte on March 15, 2020.

The Health Director will continue to assess the quickly evolving situation and may, at any time or from time to time, modify or extend this Order, or issue additional orders, related to COVID-19.

#### Definitions:

- a. For purposes of this Order, a “Mass Gathering” is any event or convening, subject to the exceptions and clarifications below, that brings together or is likely to bring together fifty (50) or more persons at the same time in a single room or other single space.
- b. Gyms, fitness centers, health clubs and theaters will cease operations immediately.
- c. A “Mass Gathering” includes events in confined outdoor spaces, which means an outdoor space that (i) is enclosed by a fence, physical barrier, or other structure and (ii) where people are present, and they are within arm’s length of one another for extended periods.
- d. This Order also does not prohibit use of enclosed spaces where 50 or more people may be present at different times during the day, so long as 50 or more people are not present in the space at the same time.
- e. For purposes of clarity, a “Mass Gathering” does not include the following: (i) Charlotte Douglas International Airport; (ii) places of worship; (iii) spaces where

**PEOPLE • PRIDE • PROGRESS • PARTNERSHIPS**

249 Billingsley Road • Charlotte, North Carolina 28211

[www.meckhealth.org](http://www.meckhealth.org)

50 or more persons may be in transit or waiting for transit such as bus, light rails or terminals; (iv) office space, hotels, residential buildings or shelters; (v) grocery stores, shopping mall, or other retail establishments where large numbers of people are present but it is unusual for them to be within arm's length of one another for extended periods; and (vii) hospitals and medical facilities.



Gibbie Harris, MSPH, BSN  
Mecklenburg County Health Director

Issued: March 17, 2020